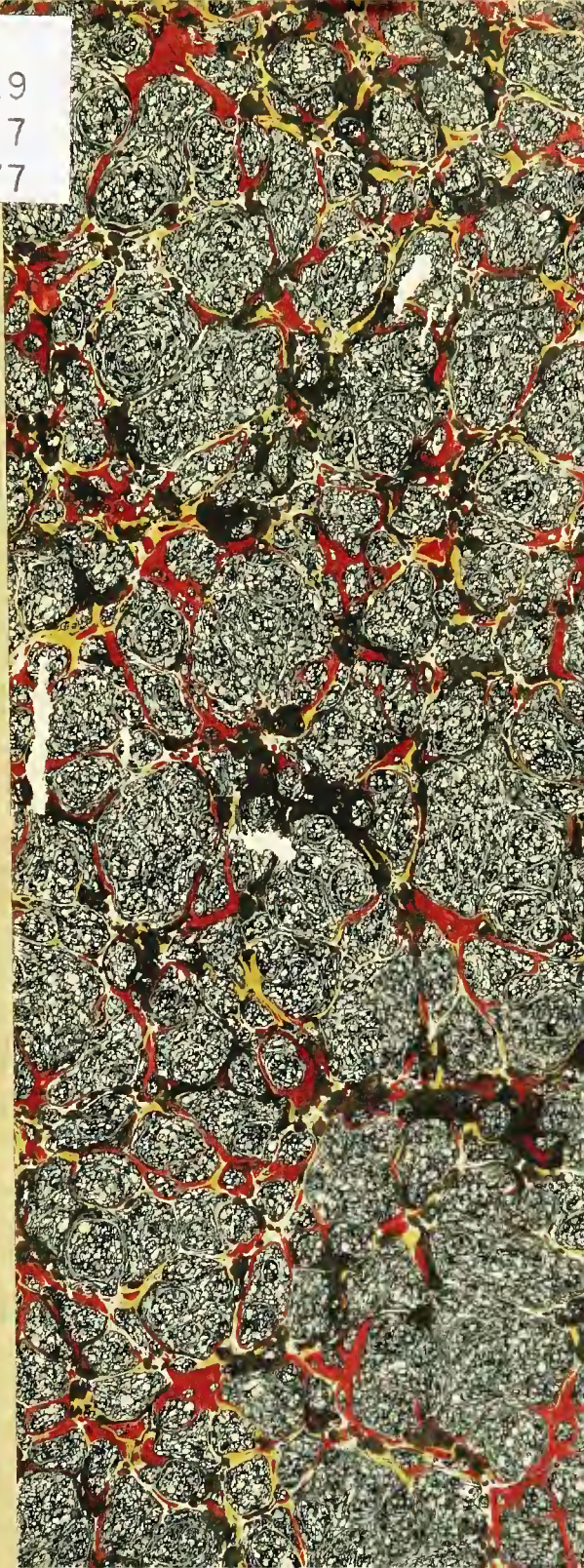


HEINRICH von Meissen — The Lay of our Lady.



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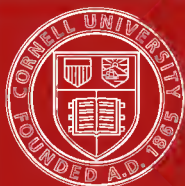
OR,

LAY OF OUR LADY.

Translated from the Original

BY

A. E. KROEGER.



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THE LAY

OF

Our Lady.

TRANSLATED FROM THE GERMAN OF FRAUENLOB,
WITH EXPLANATORY NOTES,

BY

de 1/2
A. E. KROEGER.

GRAY & BAKER,
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407 N. FOURTH ST., ST. LOUIS.

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RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED

TO

HENRY W. LONGFELLOW,

BY

THE TRANSLATOR.

INTRODUCTORY.

FRAUENLOB, THE LAST OF THE MINNESINGERS.

ALMOST every art-period has its three stages of crude beginning, complete finish, and overstrained skill. The Minnesinger period of German literature, tremblingly entering upon a newborn world of rythm and rhyme, and in its first faltering utterances of their supernatural beauty often forgetting strict measure, the very essence of art, had risen into fullest development when men like Walther von der Vogelweide, Gottfried von Strassburg, and Wolfram von Eschenbach had learned to rule with self-conscious ease and skill the manifold elements of their craft of poesy. Then, with another age of men, to whom the *life* of poetry had not been transmitted, and who nevertheless were intensely susceptible to the beauty of its form, this period entered upon its third and last stage of overstrained effort.

Among the men who stood between the two last periods as connecting links, most of them already of the citizen class and men of learning—whereas, the Minnesinger of former times was an unlettered knight, with knowledge of little but the laws of rythm, rhyme, and metre, and the games, sports and rules of his profession, but filled with unlimited devotion to woman—ranks foremost in the eyes of our own times no less than he ranked in those of his own age, which fairly worshipped him, Henry von Meissen, more generally known as Frauenlob, the Algernon Swinburne of his time, and the last of the Minnesingers. For, although he was neither a knight nor an adherent to the old form of the Minnesong, he yet retained the power of singing that old Minnesong in all its original simplicity; and while in the might of his learning he, like the other poets of his time, preferred the regions of mystical lore or reflective contemplation, as affording a wider scope for the display of his marvelous powers of versification and riches of mind,—the inimitable grace of that knight-minstrel's love-song would haunt his soul and peep out with strange bewilderment amid the imagery and lore of a new time. This new time was verily to it, the simple and clear, most strange and enigmatical. For it is a noteworthy fact, to be verified also in the modern school of poetry—aye, and in the music of Richard Wagner as well, who in his art bears about a similar relation to Mozart, Gluck, and Beethoven, as the later Minnesinger did to the predecessors—that the third period of art-development is usually accompanied by a tendency to mystical diction as well

as mystical imagery and lore. We find this exemplified even in the later times of Goethe's art-life. Thus that deep religious feeling of the Crusades, which had found so grand and charming a knightly Minnesinger expression in Eschenbach's famous romance of *Sir Parzival*, was clad by the later school of Frauenlob's time in all the subtleties, trickeries, seeming profundities, though often also marvelously beautiful and appropriate figures, tropes and alliterated word-plays of mysticism.

Like his contemporary Dante, Frauenlob cultivated this mystical tendency of thought—which from a sort of shameful self-consciousness of its absurdity in that it is unclear, loves to drape itself also in a mystical, that is to say, ungrammatical and uncommon diction—to a rare degree of both learning and expression. There was no end to his attempts at celebrating the glory and marvels of the Trinity, which, it should be remembered, was, to that age of adoration for the Virgin, rather a Trinity of Father, Mother and Son, than of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; but even where in his daring use of language he becomes so involved as to seem almost unintelligible to the modern reader, his thoughts and images are so wonderfully wrought into impetuous rhythm and over-jewelled with rhyme, that the splendor of the music seems to supply the meaning which the words failed to express. Upon his own generation the effect of his poetry seems to have been extraordinary; the adoration of his fellow-men, but more especially of women, accompanied him through life even to the grave. For when he died, in the year 1317, women carried his body to burial amidst great weeping and lamentation; and in remembrance of the transcendent glorification with which his poems had garlanded their sex, they poured wine into and upon his grave to such an extent that it reached the very walls of the church. In the homely Latin of the chronicler of that time, Albert von Strassburg: “Anno Domini MCCCXVII, in vigilia sancti Andreæ, sepultus est Henricus dictus Fraunlob in Maguntia, in ambitu majoris ecclesiæ, juxta scalas honorifice valde; qui deportatus fuit a mulieribus ab hospitio usque ad locum sepulturæ, et lamentationes et querelæ maximæ auditæ fuerunt ab eis, propter laudes infinitas, quas imposuit omni generi fœmineo in dictaminibus suis. Tanta etiam ibi copia fuit vini fusa in sepulchrum suum, quod circumfluebat per totum ambitum ecclesiæ. *Cantica Canticorum* dictavit Teutonice, quæ vulgariter dicuntur *Unser Frauen Lied*, et multa alia bona.”

The *Cantica Canticorum* or *Lay of Our Lady* is indeed the most remarkable of Frauenlob's poems, and enjoyed for some centuries the same celebrity which since the revival of Minnesinger poetry it has claimed anew; a celebrity so extensive that even a Latin translation of the poem, most probably by the learned author himself, has been preserved to us. The subject of this Lay is the glorification of the Virgin, and borrows its guise in part from the *Song of Solomon*, in the Oriental and mystical interpretation of that song as typifying the union of Christ and the Church, or of God and man. Beginning, as it is customary for Frauenlob to do, in a calm, reflective manner, the poem increases in passion and intensity steadily to the last line of its twenty stanzas, and as the subject develops into greater and greater fervor the stanzas expand into extraordinary size, the rhythm dashes along in a more impetuous current, and the rhymes ring out more

clanging and bell-like. Each stanza is composed of a strophe and an aristrophe balanced in the minutest detail; and I have been very careful to render in my translation every strophe as accurately as possible in each of its changes in regard to rhyme as well as rhythm, metre and other peculiar subtleties of verse.

We know very little of Frauenlob beyond that Latin notice of his burial in Mainz, where he seems to have lived most of his time as a learned doctor and *Magister Artium*. Like most of the later Minnesingers, he was therefore a Low-German. Poetry had indeed gradually left its sunny and cheery home in Austria and Suabia for the colder regions of Northern Germany, as itself was undergoing a process of stiffening and freezing, wandering upwards as far as Denmark, where the good and learned King Eric VIII. now ruled as the chief patron of the Minnesinger, making of Copenhagen what the Wartburg of Landgrave Herrmann of Thuringen had been to the by-gone age. Frauenlob seems to have visited the court of King Eric, and also to have lived some time at the court of Prince Wizlav of Ruegen, the last of princely Minnesingers; though he likewise visited the various courts of Southern Germany, attending and celebrating in gorgeous verses the festivals given by Wenzel II., King of Bohemia, himself a Minnesinger, and those given by Emperor Rudolf, Otto of Bavaria, and others. His fame made him everywhere a courted, welcome guest; and from the tone of his poems he seems to have enjoyed life with a quiet, serene happiness. That he had a lady-love would seem probable from his Minnesongs; but nothing of it is known positively.

A. E. KROEGER.

St. Louis, July, 1877.

I.

Behold! on high throne seated,
I saw a pregnant woman,
A wondrous crown her fitted:
The sight was strange, uncommon.

Deliv'ry she demanded,—
E'en thus the maiden stated.
Twelve stones their pure light blended
Upon her crown, well-mated.¹

II.

Now mark, how she bore lightly
 Her fate; how sprightly
 She paid court to nature rightly
 With whom her womb was laden
 She saw before her seated,
 Quickwitted,
 In seven lamps bright-glowing;²
 And yet the same, asunder,
 In lamb's guise on the heather
 Straying on fair Sion's mountains.

She had reward, most surely!
 She all purely,
 Grapelike blossom³ bore maturely.
 Should you grow mother, maiden,
 Of lamb and dove, the grape,⁴ love,
 Would shape, love,
 Filled with rare rapture, growing.
 Hence shall I never wonder
 If the same fruit should thither
 Lead you to the wine filled fountains.

III.

Aye, fruitful maid, thy field of clover
 All over
 Dew from the great heaven did cover.
 Flowers on it sat thy lord-lover.
 Ah, hear the turtle-dove's sweet singing,⁵
 Far-ringing,
 Forth swinging,
 Towards May no longer banished.
 Now Winter's rule has vanished.

The blowing grapes of thy sweet fruit have tastily been replenished.

Haste! thou must go, thy sweetheart calls thee, maiden,
 To gladden
 Him in yonder field wine-laden.⁶
 Come, love, come, dost see him redden?
 On the lion-myrrh-hill yonder⁷
 Nor wonder,
 Nor ponder,
 Maid, if he would caress thee
 And in the roses press thee;

Aye, daughter, mother, maid, thereto—do thou with love address thee!

IV.

Do not deny,
 Too shy, the joy,
 When he thee did ply—
 The King,—to go into his garden ;⁸
 Sweet warden,
 Thee greeting :
 How now, love, maid, come let us sweetly leisure !
 We'll treasure,
 Nor measure,
 Our joy; sweet wine with milk mixed sweetly drinking ;⁹
 Mixed oh, so rare,
 Befitting.

Come, dearest, say
 What gay sweet play
 Love's lips wrought that day !
 When through your wall the watch came breaking¹⁰
 And taking
 Your mantle ?
 “What hunt ye, maid, so late around the city ?
 In pity
 Tell, pretty !
 We'll bring your love, with your wounds faint and sinking,
 So threefold fair,
 So gentle !

V.

Are you the maid,
 Who through the desert went, well stored
 With rich perfume?¹¹ Then married you the Great High Lord.
 You are a bride, these words proclaim it clearly:
 The King through your gates fairly
 Came in and went
 As his will bent,
 Though yet the gates stayed closed and still stay closed forever rarely.¹²

David has said,
 That at his right hand is your place.¹³
 King Solomon found you arrayed in goldsheened dress—
 Too mickle loud, he says: Your breasts when moving
 Are like roes roving;¹⁴
 And of your thighs
 Speaks in this wise:
 Their joints are jewels, gold inwrought; ¹⁵ her dress fits her chaste loving.

VI.

To the seven churches writes St. John¹⁶
 What they should do and leave undone,
 If they would willingly be won
 From the Fall's curse to God, and, grown
 In grace, be raised before His throne.
 Then seven angels soon were gone
 To make the message to them known.
 Maid, since thy form enclosed that son,
 Who o'er all forms ranks chiefest one,
 Whose word the power of the seven spirits created:

I liken thee to these God-crowned
 Seven churches! Oh thou fruitful ground!
 Love's wisdom in thy soul was found!
 Thou graciousness, thou Love-renowned!
 Thy strength and counsel e'er stay sound,
 Thy glory us God's grace unbound!
 Maid of all maids the world around!
 This spirit o'er thy heart has wound
 Its blessed influence: hence propound
 My lips thy glory, to its best form mated.

VII.

If I the truth know clearly,
 The Seven Lights shine dearly
 Forth from thy soul, like stars from heaven, so pearly!
 In thee thy mind grew ripe betimes and early.
 What time he, the young-old one.¹⁷ sate
 In snow-white raiment, without hate,
 Attired, as he aspired, in state:
 Daughter of Sion, glory in the story!

The Seven Lights' glow dances
 O'er thy soul's strong defenses;
 Their glow thy faith and chastity enhances;
 Thy strength and candor light up vast expanses.
 Hence faith never deserted thee.
 Thy goodness shines in high degree,
 Skyward looms thy humility:
 Thus in unfading lustre stays thy glory.

VIII.

Lo, what a rare life-full love-word!
 Maid, of all hoards the chiefest hoard!
 Thy figure and thy beauty
 O'er-beauty all throne's beauty.
 Loud cry men now: "Crown her, oh King, in duty!"
 It fits so well
 Thy state' to dwell
 At His right hand there seated.
 The apple, which thou bearst, grows mellow-meated;
 The flowers laugh both sides of thy valley wheated!¹⁸
 Thy mouth with dewdrops gleams so pearly,
 They gleam as if they'd say: "Oh clearly,
 This maid of all the maidens born delights us dearly!"

King Solomon, in wisdom moulden,
 Her navel calls a goblet golden,¹⁹
 With precious stones o'er studded,
 Fine, pure, clear, light-through-flooded.
 That are named jacinths: But I call 't the blooded
 Cup of the Son,
 Wherewith He won
 And to His Father brought us.
 How tenderly the gentle daughter sought us,
 And from the fall's curse full relief then wrought us!
 Oh beauty o'er all beauty say:
 "Of beauteous love I mother am alway,
 And holiness calls me its crowning hope and stay!"

IX.

'Tis I, the choice of heaven's floor!
 My will is strong, yet mellow more.
 To loving love I gave me o'er.
 The window of my closed door
 My love stood tenderly before.²⁰
 His hand touched mine; I felt its power.
 'Twas moist with fallen dews' fresh foam:
 It seemed to me a honey-comb.
 The wax I ate,
 And drank the wet;
 Then homeward set.
 It roused sweet charm;
 Where was the harm?

My ermelin-weasel²¹ bites snakes creeping,
 My morning-dew's gentle down-dripping
 The hard flint of the curse broke clipping.
 My pronged divining-rod came sweeping
 Hell's leprosy from mankind sleeping.
 And thus grew up the palmtree leaping,
 From which to me sweet greeting came.
 Speak, wise and noble friend, Adam,
 How did my court
 Thy curse such sort
 Work of bad sport?
 Me, maid, became
 A mother's shame.

X.

'Tis I, of Heaven
 The given vote!
 The Great King's castle seat ye note!
 My towers defy the boldest rover!
 My roof's cover
 Is all over
 Out and in with lilies painted.²²
 The Throne's attendance me is granted.
 My streets are flower-surrounded,
 All who sounded
 Loud my praise. gain balm unbounded.
 The sun's glow is my garment meet!
 Therein have I me garmented so sweet and neat!
 Then laid the moon down at my feet
 In soft splendor.
 I can render
 Succor, and heal sick and wounded.

When he, sweet jester,
 Sister, hails me,²³
 Says I am too young and tells me:
 "She has no breasts; how shall we rear her
 To prepare her
 For the fairer
 Day, when she'll be spoken for, Love?"
 Now mark my sweetheart's aim and sore love:
 He watched the moon grow fuller;
 My brown²⁴ color—
 Th' alruna's²⁵ influence duller
 Paled with sleep and soporous scent.
 Then through our lattice²⁶ my dear lover went.
 Sweet behaviour
 Graced each favour
 He showed me; I was his scholar.

XI.

The smith from th' upland to me
Threw in my lap his hammer—see!

And sevenfold holiness wrought, as bade.

I bore Him who bears Earth and Heaven, and yet I stayed
E'er still a maid;

He lay in me—and his caress no toil gave aid.

No whit afraid

I fell asleep;

Meanwhile I fruitful grew with goodness, sweetness in me sweetness laid.

My dear old sweetheart kissed me so—

Boldly be't said!

I looked on him, then grew he young, then joy 'gan flow

Straightway o'er all the holy hosts of heaven.

Of chaste, proud maidenhood I boast me even;

And hope no one will think offence is given.

He said my breasts were sweeter than wine's sweetest sip—

Then he between them 'gan to creep.²⁷

How well he got to know me

When he so closely locked himself in me!

Who'll lead me to the lilies tall,²⁸

Where my *amis courteis* lies hid from view of all?

'Tis I, the hall,

Wherein took place that speech about Eve's fall!²⁹

Well, I 't recall!

Look, dearest, look!

[wall.

My morning-dawn makes heightened song and sound from ev'ry meadow

The new'day on the old night³⁰ grows!

'Tis I, the Graal,

Wherewith, the King of Glory o'ercame his cup of woes!

My flowers fed him of the violet-field,³¹

An antler was put on my forehead's shield,

Wherewith sin's curse I uprooted, as revealed,

From out men's homes; and all the old law from them took,

Thus I the Fall's curse struck and broke.

XII.

'Tis I, sugar-sweet spring flowing³²
Of life, a world's bliss ever growing!

'Tis I, a mirror of transparent purity;
Wherein God of Himself caught look!

I was with Him when He planned out the whole of His creation.

He steadily on me in His eternal longing looked;
How seemed my sight to do him good, sweet treasure!
I, soft and ever-cheerful bed of roses!

Come unto me all who me need!

I can, I will, I must concede!

'Tis I, the pilot-star men heed,
Whom none can do without, indeed!

My mood brewed
Good food.

'Tis I, the roar of the old lion, fierce and rude.

When he his whelp awakened, and death's grim might subdued!³³

I, flaming flood,

Wherein the old-grown Phoenix sought his life's renewal!

'Tis I, the noble pelican's own warmest blood,³³

And every grace I caused to bud!

'Tis I, a meadow richly rooted!

My flowers are fruitful all and fruited:

Their juices glittering scent in golden colors see!

Lo, what a rippling, silvery brook

Flows through these flowers of mine and grows forth set in proper station!

'Tis I, a field that brings forth wheat in good time to be plucked,
Whereof in God we feed in wondrous pleasure.³⁴

I threshed, I ground, I baked bread soft as mosses;

And then sweet oil upon it spread:

Hence stays its bite so soft when made.

'Tis I, the throne, from which ne'er fled

The Godhead; for God in me stayed.

My fair, wear

Rare gear.

He God, she God, I God! Hence I for none me spare.

I Father, Mother; He my Mother, Father there!

For this lies bare:

I stayed, I bore, I conquered death,³⁵ I courted Love's own jewel;

I ran, I came, I, Adelheid, eagle of virtues rare!

Yet lies not low my Engelmar.³⁶

XIII.

Glory and strength close gathering 'round me nestle!

I seem like one, who's fortified his castle!

Lo, I have sprung up sudden as an airy cedartree!

I've beautified the cypress too!

Oh, what a gentle, gracious perfume to all those that come to me!

I wandered o'er the mountains, lo!

To speak unto my sweetheart all my mind did go.

His chariot of cedar,³⁷

He the leader.

I followed I its chosen feeder,

And of his wise words friendly heeder:

Its pillars silver-laden,

Its wide floor all all with gold o'er braiden,

It covering purple: Hail me, maiden!

The midst thereof paved wide and spacious

With gentle love, winning and gracious;

Of all am I beginning precious.

Mercy has from out its blossom

On my bosom

So poured its perfect fullness:

That wisdom has unlocked my red-mouth's dullness

And now my tongue doth order mildness taste in all its wholeness.

The loved one's greeting greets me nigh!

The patriarchs saw my figure and my stature;

They say of me that never in all nature

So sweet a thing, so pure a thing, at any time was seen.

And would ye know what I can do?

I anoint, I heal, I scatter care and sooth all wounds however keen.

'Tis I, a light of virtue's splendor

Of bottomless goodness an endless power and tender.

I beckon, I clamour,

I enamour

All the world's woe by my glamour.

Thus from my heart keep I all tremor.

No wrath lies in me hidden.

From seven horns³⁸ I pour, as bidden,

That you saw on the lamb sin-ridden.

All that the prophets e'er have spoken,

Their words, their speech: Me they betoken!

Who to new heaven my friends have woken!

The seals are so upon me graven:

Bolts of heaven

However fastened tightly,

My maker and old sweetheart oped them lightly,

And within me did fold Himself in His three person, sprightly:

Lo, His maid-mother, it is I!

Evovae!

XIV.

A tailor³⁹ cut my garments me ;
 His thought its cut shaped cunningly,
 As o'er my form His hand passed free,
 He looked on me, and chose my garments, as a master chosen should.
 Then fitted me my garments beyond measure good,
 Yea, pleasing Him Himself in His own mind.
 He did a spy-trick, which was useful to our kind :
 The while I draped my garments nice,
 He was so wise,
 That He from off the garment cut a garment Him ;
 And quite as fine as my own garment 't seemed, and trim,
 Although my garment stayed all whole,
 Without a break, without a change as new and full,
 Splendid and rare, beauty of beauty's highest roll :
 The master is named master.

When in this wondrous dress He had
 Himself so wondrously now clad,
 It was so wide and broad outspread,
 That enwrapped the Great One who all earth and heaven holds in
 His hand.
 Yet was it since rent woefully on Him this garment grand !
 He wrought a cunning, shining mirror-vase ;
 When He had finished it and sat within the case,
 Adventuring on master-craft
 Of strange forces, daft.
 The mirror-vase enclosed Him, whatsoe'er His range :
 Then budded he again, as in the bloom time's change,
 From full-sized tree a branch does bud,
 And as the apple from the blooming blossom's flood ;
 The mirror-vase stays whole, in every corner good—
 Thus tied I spirits faster.
 Evovae !

XV.

'Tis I, the Star of Jacob, I!
 On me descends the praise of angels from on high!
 'Tis I, that great City of God,
 Whereof St. Augustin the fame spread wide and broad!
 My gates were ne'er unclosed,⁴⁰ yet over
 There came, to take my burden, my dear lover,
 The load I bore, and t' help me bear it—
 This to all now must freer endear it.
 With a comely maiden—blessed twain—
 Found Him His wrathful Father then,
 Hence misery great was in Him lain,
 But patiently he bore its strain
 To win the kingdom back again,
 From which Him cast His Father's ban.⁴¹

Hail me, oh hail, that I became His own dear wife!

Beloved, now lend attention brief
 And mark how sly the Godly-sweet love-thief
 Entered the centre of my soul
 And watered 't with the sweetness of His sweetness full!
 It with the sweetness thus was centered,
 That it might meet God's greeting as it entered.
 Full well it knew what chanced to 't then:
 No grame, but love; no woe, but weal; no kind of pain.
 The watchers of my castle⁴² ne'er
 Espied the secret, passing fair,
 How God in me His child did bear
 Which straightway I brought forth, the dear,
 Fair sweetness, my soul's food and cheer;
 Yea, it the spirit, I the human ware:

Thus Father, Son and Holy Ghost in me took life!

Evovae!

XVI.

'Tis I, the first thing's child beloved !
 'Tis I, foundation-wall wherein are grooved
 The Three, and yet to mankind ne'er yet known !
 He is my essence, I am His, son, brother,
 He child, and I mother ;
 He acts ; I bear,
 Nor is't with pain ; and opportunity is fair.
 His kind finds in my own its trace,
 And His form in my own has place ;
 No differences here amace.
 Lo, mankind must perceive ever our growing grace.
 No adding, and no taking from can change the case :
 It was a God t' whom I gave birth !

The word to me from heaven came
 And grew in me to be most glorified a name !
 The name it grew ; the word has ne'er become or grown ;
 And of these two was then a speech there uttered,
 Which my wits sore fluttered.
 A meaning bore
 The speech to me ; I pondered it all o'er and o'er.
 When me the messenger addressed
 I wondered how the thing had passed
 Which He announced that wonder blessed,
 Though as most true speech be 't on me impressed :
 Of depth of floor, of heighth a roof, this word so graced
 Took nourishment from me on earth !
 Evovae !

XVII.

Lo, how 't and unmixes,⁴⁸
 All that of the mixture's tricks is !
 How the mixing it transfixes !
 All the unmixed still remaineth !
 How the mixing from it straineth !
 Being and becoming, giving
 Birth ! Though I speak it, the living,
 I of Being the beginning,
 Yet the spirit's word-love winning
 Through earth-love, lo ! earth-love shrinketh
 Narrower and less heaven-love drinketh !
 I, the form of all forms measured
 After th' inner soul's norm which is treasured
 And through-flow'ed was and is and ever shall be without end.

Lo 'tis I. virtue's own nature,
 After birth of every creature !
 All that my soul thinketh purely
 Later I give form maturely.
 Lo 'tis I, measure of heaven
 And all things through heaven driven !
 How in th' arch are thickly studded
 Golden stars, that I held budded,
 Mingling in the erring starness
 Their cast, change, nearness and farness !
 I, who axled all spheres burning,
 Fixed their checking and their turning,
 Width. length. depth and height together,
 By square-measure ; my delight they all draw hither ;
 All things' numbers with their matter in my thoughts lie hidden grand.
 Evovae !

XVIII.

How in grander
 Splendor tender
 Harmonies from all sides ripple!
 How they form and three-fold triple!
 How they roll from vault and steeple!⁴⁴
 How they gambol!
 Nine choirs tremble!⁴⁵
 No one can arrest their ramble
 Where my sweetheart in his splendor our joint bliss works wondrously.

Sweetly render,
 Tender spender,
 Me my kisses, Love's dear feeder!
 My humanity's fair pleader!
 King of Jesse's race and leader!
 Sweet dreams plying
 He found me lying
 Under apple-branches toying.⁴⁶
 I was awakened up so sweetly: look thus did the youth to me!
 Evovae!

XIX.

Now listen ye unto this tale of wonder :

He was the son of the old Gardner yonder,⁴⁷

Who had Himself in His own garden grafted

The tree whereon t' await the death, that should to Him be wafted.
My faith then in humanity most terribly was shattered and o'erborn
by fear.

My child's life modelled was after its Father dear.

Now look. I am the bed of Solomon's story,⁴⁸

Rich high, floating in glory,

Which the three-score strong ones hold uplifted.

Four-and-twenty wise men have been sifted,

But only twelve th' apostles are, who Christendom first drifted.

Of Orders there are nine in all, that all my praise have thrifted.

Three patriarchs, four evangelists, great wonders wrought God-
gifted.

Yet eight⁴⁹ are wanting,

Whom I sent message

With their saintly care to guard my fame's great presage :

Thus their office vaunting.

Now scatter flowers ye where my love reposes !

Come, garland me with lilies and with roses !

He, flower, e'en from me, Flower, wished to grow forth ;

And this was in the time wherein the flowers begin to show forth.

The place was flower then named where He, Self-Flower, of me, His
Flower, in fruitful flowertime grew,

And with that Flower have I myself now flowered anew.

He shone, I glowed ; we illumine and we glitter !

March, May, Spring make sweeter !

All the gay colors of warm Summer's tresses

My sweetheart now has turned to glorious dresses ;

He says, I must his Autumn be, and in my lap he presses

The grapes, wherein My Father lay Himself in hid recesses :

Thus grew My Child, My Brother, yet not Husband's brother less is.

That curse's ailment

We have scattered

From those flowers of Mine much comfort we have gathered ;

Sinner, take their concealment !

Evovae !

XX.

Up climbs the goat for her day's fare

The mountain ;

Like her my hair !

So fair—'t shows in the fountain.⁵⁰

Through me has swam with all His might most masterly my God-Lover !

The hights of heaven I have now climbed over !

O'er alps of hardest hearts I readily now can climb ;

And with the soul I do my sweetheart's wish all time :

Aye, thus thy burning grief I oft brought joy sublime.

'Tis I, wise Noah's throney ark, that tender

Of shelter from men's sins' great flood to that strong man did render !

'Tween mankind and their God stood I, in th' very midst, nor faltered
to the end e'er.

The Father He embraces me ; the Son lies hidden in my casket slender.

Deep Red of Ruby⁵¹ gave he me with Simeon's sword uplifted ;

The Emerald wore I chastily ;

The Sapphire gleamed brightly on me ;

The *Adamas* of man's hard curse was broken by the Saviour's blood—
thus He in me drifted.

The victory's Jasper's, who this blood

Shed for us,

That warrior good

O'er flood—of misery bore us.

He burns with pure love of Berillas fairly ;

The heart of darkstreaked Jachandin grows now sunlike rarely.

His Topazying came to me in pure desire ;

Then Calcedoned I in modesty's white fire ;

Thus fruitful shame did deck with Amethysts my attire.

Lo, pleasure's chrysolites swept lightly o'er me,

When from my soul the inborn dark was lifted right before me ;

Oh sweetest theft that mantle was ;⁵² the thieving watchmen to
my love then bore me.

Thus humanely divine I grew, divinely human ; this did He and
more me.

Rejoice ye then, rejoice ; behold my balm-tree-blossom !

I each full wish's spicy scent !

My sweet pome-granate won and spent

Rare balm of comfort on you all⁵³ ; hence in pure splendor shall you
shine—pearls on God's own bosom.⁵⁴

EVORAE. AMEN !



NOTES

TO THE

LAY OF OUR LADY.

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1. The Crown with twelve jewels worn by the Virgin had been made by the angels to crown Lucifer.
 2. Seven Lamps. See Rev. I.: 12-20; II.: 4-5.
 3. Blossom-Christ.
 4. Solomon's Song, VII.: 12.
 5. " " II.: 11-13.
 6. " " VII.: 12.
 7. " " IV.: 6-8.
 8. " " V.: 1.
 9. " " V.: 1.
 10. " " V.: 7; III.: 3.
 11. " " III.: 6.
 12. Ezeikiel, XLIV.: 11.
 13. Psalms.
 14. Solomon's Song, VII.: 3.
 15. " " VII.: 1.
 16. Rev. I.. 4.
 17. Christ. Young as man, old as God.
 18. Solomon's Song, VII.: 2.
 19. " " VII.: 2.
 20. " " V.: 4-5.
 21. Christ.
 22. Solomon's Song, II.: 1-2.
 23. " " VIII.: 8.
 24. " " I.: 5.
 25. " " VII.: 13. Alruna-Mandrake.
 26. " " II.: 9.
 27. " " I.: 13.
 28. " " II.: 16.

29. "I am she of whom God spoke to His angels as the one who was to make good Eve's fall by giving birth to Christ."
30. The new day—Christendom; the old night—Judaism.
31. Christ: the violet-field being the Virgin herself.
32. Solomon's Song, IV.: 15.
33. It was a curious belief of the middle ages that the lion could restore his whelps to life by his roar. Thus Mary here represents herself as restoring mankind to eternal life by her intercession.
34. Allusion to the belief that the pelican fed its young ones, if necessary, with its own blood.
35. Allusion to the Bread of the Communion.
36. Meaning that she did all this because Christ did it, and He was fed of her flesh.
37. Adelheid and Engelmar were the names of two lovers in Nithart's then very popular, but rather coarse, songs. They might thus signify to that age, what Romeo and Juliet would typify to us—only in a coarser way; and there is, undoubtedly, an intentional significance in the self-identification of the Virgin with the lowest as well as the highest. But those names are also grammatically significant: *Adel*, Eagle, *Heit*, Selfhood, Leisure, virtue; and *Engle*, Angel, *Nar*.
38. Solomon's Song, III.: 9-10.
39. Revelations, V.: 6.
40. The Tailor, God, cuts (shapes, fashions) the Virgin's garment, (her body), and then is so pleased with His work, that He shapes another (body) for Himself in Christ, which is woefully rent on Him in the crucifixion; though it has marvellously grown and now enwraps the whole world (Christendom), and moreover has made an emblem of itself in the *Hostia* (mirror-vase) of the Communion, from which it outbuds and redeems all mankind.
41. Ezeikiel XLIV.: 1-2.
42. God banished Christ from heaven to become Himself man.
43. "The inmates of my household, who watched my body, never saw the change."
44. All the first part of this stanza refers to the mixture of the two natures in Christ, whole in the womb of the Virgin.
45. Referring to the rise and fall of tones.
46. The Nine Choirs of Heaven
47. Solomon's Song, VIII.: 5.
48. The Legend has it, that Seth took a twig from the tree of life in Paradise, and grafted it on the grave of Adam, from which sprouted forth the tree which was used for the crucifixion of Christ.
49. Solomon's Song, III.: 7-8.
50. The eight are probably the seven spheres of the planets, together with the eighth sphere of the fixed stars.
51. Solomon's Song, IV.: 1; VI.: 5.
52. Each of the precious stoues had a specific virtue in the belief of that age.
53. Reference again to Solomon's Song, III.: 3, and V.: 7.
54. All the similes of fruits are taken from the Song of Solomon.

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By

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